RAJYA SABHA

Tuesday, the 29th July, 1986/87
Sravana 1907 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock. **Mr. Chairman** in the Chair.

MEMBER SWORN

Shri M. F. Hussain (Nominated)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I hope you will paint a very good picture of this House.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. CHAAIRMAN: Question No. 161 has been discussed threadbare. I am not going to allow any supplementary. The question will be put and answered.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Madhya Pradesh): The Member should be allowed. But there should not be too many supplementaries.

Production of jute

*161. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) What is the expected production of jute during the current year;

(b) what is the market price of raw jute at present; and

(c) whether it is below the minimum price fixed by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THT MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

(a) Production estimates of raw jute and mesta for 1986-87 season have not yet become available. However, the Jute Corporation of India and trade and industry have tentatively assessed the crop size to be around 70 lakh bales.

(b) and (c). The JCI has entered the market and started purchasing at the support price, fixed by the Government, which is Rs. 233/- per quintal for W-5 grade in some districts of North Bengal, where the new jute crop of White varieties have started arriving in small quantities.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, since I have a right to ask a question and the Minister has the freedom not to answer it, I seek your protection. My question has been categorical. What is the market price of raw jute at present and whether it is below the minimum price fixed by Government? It seems that the Minister does not know what the market price is and whether it has gone below the minimum. Therefore, let me share my facts with him. It is on the 25th July that the news appeared in 'Telegraph' "Sources of the Jute Millers Association here point out that W-5 Prices in West Bengal are hovering at about Rs. 175 as against the minimum price of Rs. 296".

MR. CHAIRMAN: You ask him whether it is so.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: That is on 25th July. One month back, a semi-official statement of J.C.I. apeparing in 'Business Standard' of 21-6-1986 says:

> "However, the decision for entering the market earlier by the J.C.I. has been influenced by the fact that the old crop is still being sold at or below the newly-announced official support price."

Then, I was in Calcutta on Sunday and I had my information. I got a telephone yesterday from Calcutta from one of our trade union leaders. He says that the market price of raw jute in Cooch-Behar is Rs. 200 as against the Government price of Rs. 233. I meant a leader of the Kisan Association yesterday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Two minutes over.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: One minute more, Sir. He said in Purnea the raw jute is being sold at Rs. 183 per quintal as against the raw jute price of Rs. 233. I have more statistics to show. But my firm point is that the jute price at the present moment of time has fallen below the market price.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please put your question otherwise, you won't get the second supplementary.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: In this background, my question is that since the Minister does not agree or does not know that the price has fallen below the minimum, I suggest that there should be a parliamentary delegation from all parties which will visit the jute areas and see for themselves whether there is a real fall in jute prices. Let the Minister agree to my suggesstion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Both the supplementaries have been put. So, you give your answer to both of them.

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN: I quite appreciate the very comprehensive knowledge of my hon. Friend and I would certainly like to assure him that the J.C.I. has no intention to buy below the support price. The only problem at the moment is that there is very rain in those two districts and except for the normal moisture, the price that has been fixed for that area is Rs. 233. And actually the Jute Commissioner has been asked very specifically to look into this matter and see that the price which has been fixed should be paid to the growers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, one minute for the supplementary.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Anyway, since the Minister does not say categorically now that the price has fallen below the minimum, I only want to draw your attention, Sir, to what is happening in the House. Anyway, Sir, my supplementary is that since our complaint is against the functioning of the JCI, since our complaint is that the JCI is not purchasing from the growers and it is purchasing only from the courier and since our complaint is that the JCI management is West Bengal is hand in gloves with the benamidars of the jute mill association. I suggest and request the Minister, therefore, to agree to my suggestion. My question is whether he is ready to accept my suggestion. My suggestion is that there should be an Advisory Committee of Kisan Organisations, Block Development Officer and the representatives of the Panchayat, and that Committee will be attached with every purchasing centre and there is joint planning will be done to purchase the jute, not from the office where your officers are sitting but from the places where jute is grown. This is my supplementray (a). And my supplementary (b) is...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No please. You are exceeding the limits. You are exploiting my kindness towards you.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: I will take 30 seconds.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister will now answer.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Sir, I beg you...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. If you cannot put the question within two minutes. you are not entitled to put the question.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: I want half a minute, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. You have taken seven minutes. Yes, Mr. Minister.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: I want to know...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. It would not be recorded. The Minister will reply now.

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN: The Jute Commissioner is there just to watch the interests of the growers, and we have been requesting the State Government to issue the identity cards to all the growers so that we but only from the growers. At the same time we have been paying Rs. 75 lakhs to the State Government for providing the marketing facilities at the hats and mandis, and if they provide these facilities, surely they can depute one of their representatives also there to see that the purchases are made from the growers, specially those growers who bring their identity cards.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Sir, I have raised my hand.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This has been discussed in a Call Attention Motion. Question No. 162—Mr. Satyanarayan Reddy.

Release of Imported Natural Rubber

*162. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Rubber Growers Association have requested the Central Government to direct the State Trading Corporation to stop the release of imported natural rubber in the market in view of crash in the prices of natural rubber to uneconomic level; and

(b) if so, what action Government have taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Keeping in view downward trend of domestic rubber prices, Government have asked the State Trading Corporation to regulate import and releases of natural rubber suitably so as to achieve the price objective.

SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Sir, during 1986-87, the natural rubber production in the country has been anticipated by the Rubber Board at 215,000 tonnes. Why has the demand been placed at 215,000 tonnes? The shortfall has been plugged at 35,000 tonnes. Against this shortfall, the Rubber Board has plans to import 30,000 tonnes. The Rubber Growers' Association has appealed to direct the State Trading Corporation not to release the imports. I would like to know from hon. Minister that in view of the present situation, in view of the rubber production in the country, whether the Government is planning to review the whole policy and evolve a new policy so far as rubber production and import of rubber is concerned.

SHRI BRAHM DUTT: Actually, the figure of production as given by the Indian Rubber Growers' Association, is 2,26,000 tonnes and the consumption will be 2,50,000 tonnes. There will be a shortfall of 24,000 tonnes. So, imports will be allowed keeping this shortfall in view, and we have taken action on their demand.

SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: The Minister has said that action will be taken. I would like to know what action is proposed to be taken.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He says the shortfall is 24,000 tonnes and imports will be allowed only to the extent of 24,000 tonnes.

SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Sir, States of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are the rubber growing states. Kerala alone produces three-fourths of the rubber in the country and they are interested in protecting the small rubber growers and the farmers; they have to protect the interests of the small rubber producing farmers. At the same time we have to see that demand is also met in the country. In order to meet this situation how is the Government going to evolve a policy so that farmers are protected, the interests of the States which are producing rubber, are protected and at the same time consum-